

U.S. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

CARIBBEAN AIRPORT CERTIFICATION PROCESS PROJECT

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Promoting U.S. Exports, Supporting U.S. Jobs

Agencies across the U.S. government are partnering to help U.S. companies connect with buyers worldwide. Through a variety of resources, federal agencies can provide U.S. firms with the information and tools they need to compete for foreign contracts. From trade advocacy and export promotion efforts to matchmaker services and promoting the availability of export credits, federal agencies can support U.S. companies in selling their goods and services to the 95% of the world's consumers, who are located outside of the United States, by helping to create opportunities and to level the playing field.

For more information on this project, possible financing options and export opportunities in the Caribbean, contact:

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

Jacob Flewelling

Country Manager, Chile, Colombia and the Caribbean
(703) 875 - 4357 // jflewelling@ustda.gov

U.S. Commercial Service (in-country)

Isabella Cascarano

Senior Commercial Officer
809/ 227-2121 // Isabella.Cascarano@trade.gov

International Trade Administration / Manufacturing & Services

Alexis Haakensen

International Trade Specialist
(202) 482-6235 // Alexis.Haakensen@trade.gov

U.S. Export-Import Bank

Xiomara Creque

Regional Director Americas
(202) 565 - 3477 // xiomara.creque@exim.gov

Overview

Headquartered in Kingston, Jamaica, the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) is a regional aviation organization that encompasses the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The U.S. Trade and Development Agency provided a grant for Caribbean Airport Certification Process Technical Assistance. The objective of this Technical Assistance was to assist selected CASSOS member states with their airport certification process by creating or updating master airport safety plans and certification manuals for each airport. The CASSOS member states invited to participate in this USTDA-sponsored project are Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

Project Description

The Caribbean Airport Certification Process created or updated (where applicable) master airport safety plans and airport certification manuals for participating member states. The plans addressed issues related to management, operation, security, compliance, safety and other issues pertinent to specific airports. The master airport safety plans and certification manuals were reviewed and approved by the state civil aviation regulatory body, which has adopted International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulations, and issues airport operating certificates. These regulatory bodies also conduct periodic inspections to ensure continued compliance. In a manner consistent with ICAO standards, deficiencies must be identified and procurement strategies must be developed that facilitate certification.

Airports operate under the regulatory control of the respective civil aviation authority of member countries, as most airports are state-owned, with the exception of the two privatized airports in Jamaica.

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Of the CASSOS member states, the international airports serving Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenadines, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago meet ICAO standards that permit airlines to enter the United States directly from these islands. These countries have been classified as meeting ICAO Category 1 standards.

There are numerous airlines providing service within the Caribbean, but essentially there are three carries with intra-Caribbean service: Air Jamaica, Caribbean Airlines, and Leeward Island Air Transport.

The status of airport certification in CASSOS member states is a joint effort between the civil aviation regulatory bodies and the owners and operators of the airports. Both parties seek to meet international standards as prescribed by ICAO. One of these standards gaining an added level of importance to civil authorities worldwide in recent years is airport certification. Implicit in receiving certification is the preparation of an airport certification manual and the implementation of a program that successfully addresses the components of that manual.

Airport certification manuals primarily address a range of procedures for the preparations, inspection and use of the airport facilities including their compliance with international standards. Notwithstanding these objectives, international aircraft operations are not prohibited from operating into non-certificated airports. This creates a cause and effect situation wherein those member states of CASSOS, as well as ICAO, may overlook the need to prepare an airport certification because their ability to meet the requisite standards and practices is not feasible for a number of reasons, including non-allocation for financial and human resources required for implementation of a certification plan.

Airport operators will be required to prepare an airport certification manual, which is specific to the conditions of the individual airport. These manuals encompass a range of procedures for the operation, inspection and use of the airport facilities. They focus on issues related to: management and administration; reporting; maintenance, making and lighting; aircraft guidance signage; self-inspection; emergency response plans; runway end safety area compliance; aircraft rescue and firefighting; and associated training. The content of the manual can be expanded to address other issues pertinent to the specific airport.

Airport certification manuals are reviewed and then ultimately approved by the state civil aviation regulatory body, which is empowered to issue an airport operating certificate. The regulatory body also conducts periodic inspections to ensure continued compliance the regulation.

Status and Implementation

There is across-the-board interest in moving forward with the implementation of various airport modernizations and upgrades over the next 10 to 15 years. For example, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is considering building a new airport, Guyana has identified numerous upgrades and has developed an implementation plan, Suriname has developed an implementation plan that includes the installation of an ARS radar and relocation of the fuel farm, Grenada is in the process of developing an implementation plan, and Jamaica is considering runway improvements.

Project Cost and Financing

Potential financing sources for the upgrades include development funds such as the Caribbean Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank on the United States for equipment such as radars, fire trucks, runway safety areas, and taxiways. Other potential external financing sources include government entities, commercial lenders and private equity funds, and other international development funds and export credit agencies. Implementation may also be financed internally by airports receiving the upgrades.

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U.S. Competitiveness and Export Potential

It is estimated that the implementation of improvements needed to meet the requirements embedded in the airport certification manual can generate U.S. export potential of approximately \$79 million, the majority of which is associated with the installation of Engineered Material Arresting Systems at a number of international airports in CASSOS countries.

Below is a list of needs that can be met by suppliers located in the United States:

- Airfield signage that inform and direct taxiing aircraft to areas of the airport and minimize runway incursions
- Runway edge lighting systems
- Runway end safety area preparation
- Taxiway
- Paved surfaces
- Aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) response equipment
- ARFF personnel protection equipment
- Aircraft fuel and hazardous waste management facilities
- Associated training
- Navigational aids
- Security audit and equipment
- Information technology
- Airspace design
- Air traffic control procedures